



## CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

May 7, 2008

### **S. 2657**

**A bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to prescribe regulations to reduce the incidence of vessels colliding with North Atlantic right whales by limiting the speed of vessels, and for other purposes**

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on April 24, 2008*

S. 2657 would require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to issue—within 30 days of the bill's enactment—a final rule on speed restrictions for vessels operating in the North Atlantic that would provide protection for North Atlantic right whales that is at least as stringent as a previously proposed rule would have provided. Based on information from NOAA, CBO estimates that implementing S. 2657 would have no significant effect on discretionary outlays and no effect on revenues or direct spending. The agency is already processing the proposed rule, and complying with S. 2657 would probably have minimal effect on the rulemaking procedure.

By requiring the Secretary of Commerce to issue a rule that imposes speed restrictions on certain vessels, including publicly owned ferries, the bill could impose both a private-sector and an intergovernmental mandate as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA). The bill would impose a mandate on certain vessels (both public and private) if the required rule establishes speed restrictions on those vessels that are more stringent than the restrictions that would have been included in the final rule in the absence of the bill. Based on information from NOAA, CBO estimates that the cost of any mandate would fall below the annual thresholds established in UMRA for private-sector and intergovernmental mandates (\$136 million and \$68 million in 2008, respectively, adjusted annually for inflation).

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Deborah Reis (for federal costs), Amy Petz (for the private-sector impact), and Elizabeth Cove (for the state and local impact). The estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.